

tistical inference. In anthropology, it would be particularly useful to those who wish an introduction to statistics for their own use, or to those who seek a deeper understanding of quantitative research in sociology.

*Discussions on Child Development: a Consideration of the Biological, Psychological, and Cultural Approaches to the Understanding of Human Development and Behavior.* J. M. TANNER and BÄRBEL INHELDER (Eds.) (The Proceedings of the Fourth Meeting of the World Health Organization Study Group on the Psychobiological Development of the Child, Vol. 4, Geneva, 1956.) New York: International Universities Press Inc., 1960. xiii, 186 pp., 4 figures, index, references. \$5.00.

Reviewed by WILLIAM KESSEN, Yale University

This curious collection is something more than just another Let's-get-together-and-talk book. John Bowlby, W. Grey Walter, Konrad Lorenz, Margaret Mead, and Jean Piaget have developed, during the several years of the Study Group's activity, an apparent understanding of one another's prejudices so intimate that the reader—particularly if he does not know well the first three volumes in this series—may feel on occasion that he is intruding on a private conversation. Nonetheless, if he is willing to barge in and if he does not have an irremediable objection to disconnected discourse as an alternative to systematic presentation, he will find healthful provocation. In addition to the five headliners there were present at the meetings represented in this book eight other regular and relatively silent members of the group (F. Fremont-Smith, G. R. Hargreaves, Bärbel Inhelder, E. E. Krapf, K. A. Melin, M. Monnier, J. M. Tanner, and R. Zazzo) and two guests, Erik Erikson and L. von Bertalanffy. Erikson led a discussion of psychosexual stages, von Bertalanffy talked of General System Theory (these presentations were largely paraphrases of positions taken earlier and elsewhere by their authors), and Piaget led three sessions on equilibration, logical structures, and the definition of stages.

The report of these live meetings of the Group make up roughly the second half of *Discussions*; the rest consists of a precirculated paper by Piaget which sets a group of general questions about developmental theory, precirculated responses to Piaget's paper by seven other members of the Group, and Piaget's summation prepared after the meetings themselves. Certainly the ugliness of conference reports is not peculiar to *Discussions*, but the diffuseness of the present volume puts in specific form the broader problem—how seriously should we take the "discussions" of scholars, even as talented and prestigious as those heard in *Discussions*, who may leave behind the sobriety and polish of their usual work under the rationale of "education . . . at the truly professorial level" (p. xii)?

The fourth volume of *Discussions* is the last; the Study Group sought to bring together general principles and conclusions from their earlier, more detailed, and more heavily empirical conversations, even though they recognized the danger of flaccid overgeneralization. The book is, in fact, a contest between specific observations reluctant to general statement and laws often too inclusive to be useful. But the effort is noble and several noteworthy themes can be traced.

Chief among them, and a fair sample of the Group's work, concerned "equilibration" and the problem of stages; Piaget reaffirms his contention that the development of intelligence is directed toward "various forms of equilibrium" and that points or conditions of cognitive equilibrium in the life of the child can be seen as "stages." His colleagues chew roughly on Piaget's proposals (which are, of course, presented in detail and with examples in *Discussions*) with no one failing to make a contribution;

von Bertalanffy expresses the Group's almost unanimous distaste for "equilibrium" and proposes the substitution of "steady state of an open system," Tanner rejects with hardly a bow the utility of the notion of "stage," Grey Walter adds incisive comments about the dependence of stage-psychology on the presence of thresholds and notes the saltatory changes in the behavior of a system that may take place with a small change in input, Zazzo questions whether it is wise to look for general stages that include emotional as well as cognitive behavior, and Margaret Mead maintains that cross-cultural variation is so great as to "make any idea of general stages appear useless" (p. 49). It is not surprising in the face of this array that no clear single position about equilibration and stages (or about any other metatheoretical issue) grew from the meetings. However, there was apparently some communication and some modest revision of position; at one point Piaget is moved to say, "I have not the slightest desire to generalize from the case of logic to all the rest of mental life. Logic is the only field where equilibrium is fully achieved . . ." (p. 106), a statement greeted by Lorenz with "a sigh of relief." It is Piaget, too, who emphasizes the importance of transition rules that govern changes from one stage to another or, more generally, the nature of the mechanisms of development. It is diagnostic of the primitive state of theory in child development that this most profound of theoretical issues received hardly more than passing attention from the Study Group.

Two bits of glitter, one surely gold, may attract the special attention of anthropologists. The first is Bowlby's treatment of memory in psychoanalytic theory and the ways in which the mother may be "constructed" by the child (Bowlby's contribution is altogether superior to anything else in the book); the second is an exchange between Piaget and Mead (pp. 116-120) during which he proposes a series of cross-cultural studies of cognitive development.

The proposition can be defended that Piaget, Bowlby, and Lorenz have as much to say of consequence for an understanding of child development as any three men alive; hopefully, they will use their distillation of these discussions in future more finely finished presentations.

*The Types of the Folktale in Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Spanish South America.* TERRENCE LESLIE HANSEN. (Folklore Studies: 8.) Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957. xvi, 202 pp. \$4.50.

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In the last decades, collections of folktales have become very numerous in Hispanic America. These texts, however, are dispersed, and the need for their classification and organization is acutely felt. The volume under review, reflecting industrious and meticulous care, is a partial answer to that need. A second volume, containing analyses of the remaining North and Central American texts will be published soon. The present study is to be understood as "part of a plan to provide a complete index of the folktale in Spain and in Hispanic America."

The classification follows the Aarne-Thompson scheme, with additions by Boggs (*Index of Spanish Folktales*, 1930), and new entries relating to animal tales by the author. What is derived from the three different sources is made clear through typography. Hansen is critical of his own classification of a certain number of tales; this obviously is to his credit.

As Aurelio M. Espinosa did, Hansen includes folktales collected among partially acculturated groups of predominant Amerindian composition. His method, however, excludes the possibility of identifying Indian or African elements. Analysis of cultural